

and education on managing diabetes.)

**Leisure Activities:** Reading books, newspapers, and magazines using talking books, radio reading services, and other audio reading services available via telephone, radio, and tapes through the U.S. mail. Learning new ways of doing things you've always enjoyed or want to learn for the first time, including crafts, woodworking, sewing, knitting, crocheting, board games, bingo, playing cards, exercising, running, and accessing recreational resources in the community.

**Peer Support:** Meeting other people who are also visually impaired or blind to share experiences, frustrations, success stories, and information, and learning about support groups and organizations of people who are blind and visually impaired.

**Low-Vision Devices:** Learning about useful low-vision devices for reading and close work, distance, and glare control, and how to use these devices.

**Information and Referral:** Getting information about other programs and resources such as transportation systems, Lions Clubs,

telephone services, the Assistive Technology Loan Fund, and more.

**Additional Disabilities:** If you have other disabilities in addition to vision loss, we will work with you to accommodate your needs using our resources and those of other organizations. The Michigan Commission for the Blind has a DeafBlind Unit, which specializes in providing services to individuals who are both deaf and blind. These services may include hearing evaluations, assistive hearing devices, and more.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program:** The Michigan Commission for the Blind has a Vocational Rehabilitation Program available for adults of any age (including those 55 or older) who are interested in working full-time or part-time in the occupation of their choice.

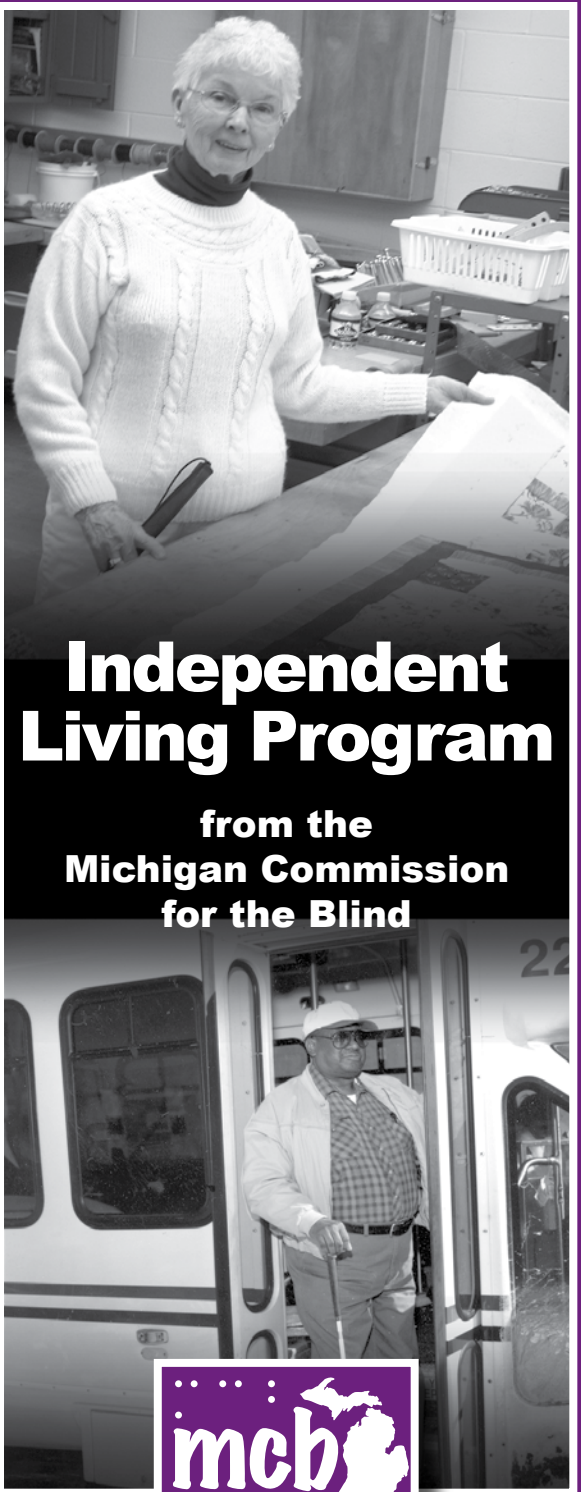
MCB's training and other services can be provided in your home, at the residential Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center in Kalamazoo, and/or at a week-long Mini Adjustment Seminar held at various locations around the state as an introduction to the MCB Training Center. (Additional training opportunities may be available in your area.) The MCB Training Center serves approximately 400 people each year age 16 and older who are

participating in MCB programs, including the Independent Living Program. Staff are trained and experienced in working with people who are blind or visually impaired. All teaching and counseling services, as well as room and board, are provided at no cost to those attending the center. Length of stay at the MCB Training Center is based on individual goals set by you and your Independent Living Instructor.

If you have questions about the Independent Living Program, call the Michigan Commission for the Blind toll-free at **1-800-292-4200**.


In addition to the Independent Living Program, the Michigan Commission for the Blind provides other services for youth and adults who are blind or visually impaired. MCB has eight field offices statewide and a central office in Lansing. For more information on any of our training and other services, contact the Michigan Commission for the Blind toll-free at **1-800-292-4200** or visit our website at [www.michigan.gov/mcb](http://www.michigan.gov/mcb).

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# Independent Living Program

from the  
**Michigan Commission for the Blind**



## **IF YOU'RE LEGALLY BLIND**

and age 55 or older, and you want to continue living at home as self-sufficiently as possible, the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) Independent Living Program is for you. If there are things you can't do anymore because of vision loss, you can learn how to do many of these things again, safely and effectively, without using vision. The MCB Independent Living Program is funded through state and federal funds.

To be eligible for the Independent Living Program, you must meet at least one of these criteria:

- Visual acuity with best correction must be 20/100 or worse in the better eye, or
- Visual fields must subtend an angle of less than 20 degrees in each eye, or
- Visual acuity with best correction must be 20/100 or worse in the better eye with a prognosis of rapid deterioration.

If you're not sure whether or not you meet at least one of these criteria, you should see your eye doctor, or call the Michigan Commission for the Blind for additional information.

MCB Independent Living Program Instructors are trained in helping people who are blind or visually impaired to achieve independence. When you contact the Michigan Commission for the Blind, first, an instructor will make arrangements to meet with you to find out what things are difficult for you and what you want to accomplish. Second, the two of you will work together to design a training plan tailored to your own needs and goals. Each person is different, but your training may include learning to use some or all of these skills and resources:

**Orientation and Mobility:** Getting around your home, your community, and beyond by using a cane or dog, public transportation, and other effective techniques for keeping track of where you are in relation to your environment, and learning how to walk with a sighted person.

**Adaptive Kitchen Skills:** Preparing meals using adaptive devices and methods for labeling foods; measuring; pouring; preparing ingredients; keeping, organizing, and following your own recipes without vision; using utensils and appliances safely; using large-print, Braille, and talking timers; and determining when food is done.

**Communications:** Writing by hand, check writing, checkbook management, using the telephone and organizing phone numbers, using voice recorders for note taking, using Braille and other labeling techniques for identifying and organizing items, and using a computer keyboard to send and receive e-mail.

**Home Maintenance and Management:** Plugging in electrical cords, using keys and locks, and using simple tools such as screwdrivers and pliers for basic repairs. Using home appliances (washer, dryer, etc.) and electronics (TV, DVD player, CD player, tape recorder, digital recorders and players, etc.).

**Time and Money:** Keeping track of time using large-print, Braille, or talking clocks, watches, and timers, and learning to fold money to keep track of bills of different values.

**Personal Management:** Labeling medications, toiletries, and clothing. Learning tips for personal grooming without vision, such as how to get toothpaste on a toothbrush. Managing medical conditions such as diabetes using devices like talking glucose meters. (MCB Independent Living Instructors work with diabetic educators and nurses, who provide additional support

